

Living Greyhawk™

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JOURNAL

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Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron. —Cuthbertine proverb

CAMPAIGN NEWS

YOU'RE OUTTA HERE!

Can you believe it's been more than two years since the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign premiered? More than 300 rounds of adventures have come out in that time, and many more are on the way. To that end, it is time to say goodbye to the adventures that premiered in the first year of the campaign, 591 CY. As of December 31st, 2002, all adventures designated "Year 1" have been retired from the campaign. Although it may take some time to get the RPGA database updated to reflect this change, this is the official notice that after that date, no year one adventure should be ordered or run.

BUTTONS? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKING BUTTONS!

At last summer's Gen Con US and Gen Con UK, the RPGA handed out special buttons as a way to thank all members who attended and visited the RPGA booth. These buttons give bonuses to different kinds of rolls while playing an RPGA scenario. The buttons are official and are legal to use in the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign. For more details on these items, please check out the RPGA website at www.wizards.com/rpga.

THE LIVING GREYHAWK CAMPAIGN SOURCEBOOK

In *DRAGON* #302, we briefly touched on some of the changes coming for Year 3 of the campaign. This month,

we delve more deeply into some of those changes.

The first of these changes is the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*, a new resource that combines all previous campaign rules updates into a single free downloadable volume. The sourcebook's 40+ pages might seem intimidating, but the easy-to-reference book should provide a valuable resource to LIVING GREYHAWK DMs and players.

The *Campaign Sourcebook* includes several official rulings, answers to commonly asked questions about the campaign, and additional information aimed at making it easier to introduce new players into the campaign.

By the time you read this, the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* should be available on the LIVING GREYHAWK website at www.living-greyhawk.com. Here's an overview of what you'll find within its pages:

Chapter One: What is a "Living" Campaign?

This is the most common question asked by new members of the RPGA. This chapter is an introduction to the concept of LIVING campaigns, giving an overview of how a campaign is managed and what players must know and do to participate.

Chapter Two: Living Greyhawk Primer

This chapter introduces the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign, briefly explaining

some things that make it unique among LIVING campaigns. It explains the regional system and the different kinds of scenarios and events available to interested players and DMs.

Chapter Three: Character Generation Guidelines

The rules used to make a starting character for the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign are outlined here. The chapter includes a list of books you will need to play and any changes to the core rules that have been made specifically for LIVING GREYHAWK. This section contains very few changes from what you most likely already know. We have included a complete list of legal gods, their domains, and favorite weapons to make it easier to pick for your cleric or paladin.

Chapter Four: Adventure Record and Master Item Logsheet

This section explains the biggest changes to the campaign. We've revamped what used to be called the Adventure Cert into an easier-to-use form. Now known as the Adventure Record, this full-page colored certificate will make it much easier to keep your character's records up to date and in order.

For starters, you'll no longer have to keep track of total character wealth, and instead will merely record total gold pieces on hand. We've also separated the Time Unit, Gold-on-Hand, and Experience boxes into three different

sections of the Adventure Record, in order to clear up confusion. These boxes are now color coded with new subtotal boxes, which should make it easier to add things up at the end of an adventure.

And, in a move sure to be popular the world over, players no longer must write every single item they own on each Adventure Record. The Master Item Logsheet (MIL) is a single sheet used to track all of your non-*Player's Handbook* equipment (such as magic items). Now, instead of meticulously tracking that stuff every single time you play, you can go months without having to redo it and can manage your gear during downtime at home instead of in a frantic rush between slots at the gaming table.

Chapter Five: Rulebook and Metagame Policy

Although LIVING GREYHAWK follows the core rules of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS as expressed in the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, it also utilizes rules material from other Wizards of the Coast DUNGEONS & DRAGONS products. Chapter Five reviews this additional material and provides guidelines on how it can be used in the campaign.

A newly expanded prestige class list includes additional options from past issues of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Journal*, and a new section on feats explains how your character can take advantage of unusual non-core options.

Chapter Six: Beyond the Core Rules

Certain spells, game issues, and magic items require additional clarification and rules to work in a massive organized play campaign environment. This section details those spells and items, providing additional rules and guidelines on how LIVING GREYHAWK players and DUNGEON MASTERS should handle them when they come up during a game session.

A newly expanded section on spells covers campaign rules designed to

handle such thorny issues as *clone*, *lesser planar ally*, *awaken*, and many others. The *Campaign Sourcebook* also features rules on how to bring your comrades back from the dead and how to handle that pesky party member who has fleas and howls at the moon.

Additionally, we've included errata on several magic items and expanded rules on how to use the Leadership feat in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign.

Chapter Seven: Magic Item Creation

This chapter covers how to create magic items. For the most part, we've left this section the same as it's been in the past. Though we've made some modifications to how a player determines what his character can make, the actual rules covering the creation process have not changed and still follow the guidelines laid out in the core D&D rules.

Chapter Eight: Running a Living Greyhawk Event

So you want to run a LIVING GREYHAWK event? This chapter was created just for you. It covers everything you need to know as a judge and as an event coordinator. Look for rules on what you can and cannot do, how to handle paperwork, and where to turn if you need a ruling or run into a problem.

Chapter Nine: The LG FAQ

We've gathered the most commonly asked questions about the campaign and compiled them (along with answers) in this helpful chapter. Before you send an email to a campaign administrator, please check the *Campaign Sourcebook* to ensure that your question hasn't already been answered.

Chapter Ten: Contacts, Websites, & Message Boards

This chapter might be called the Who's Who of LIVING GREYHAWK, with a full contact list for the campaign's directing Circle as well as the Points of Contact for all LIVING GREYHAWK regions. Also

included are regional website links and links to various campaign message boards and mailing lists.

In Summary

As you can see, the *Campaign Sourcebook* is stocked full of LIVING GREYHAWK goodness, including all the rules that you as a player or DM must know to play in the campaign. Updates to the *Campaign Sourcebook* will be considered every 6 months, although we will do our best to leave the document unchanged for as long as possible.

We know that change for the sake of change is bad, but in this case the change was needed. Some checks and balances needed to be put into the system before it overloaded itself and fell apart. We want the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign to be around for a long time, and we believe that with these new rules and the help of our massive and dedicated staff, we can continue to bring you what we think is the greatest LIVING campaign for years to come.

BUT I NEED TO PLAY RIGHT NOW!

Okay. So it's past January 1st by the time you're reading this. You have some Year 2 scenarios ordered and are ready to play. How do you handle the paperwork, since you have the old Adventure Certs that came with the scenario from RPGA HQ? Don't sweat it. It's easy.

For regional modules, contact your triad for a new version of the cert. For core events, contact the Circle representative for your meta-region (found in the *Campaign Sourcebook*). You will need to provide your name, RPGA #, event code, and when and where the game is running. He will provide you with an updated Adventure Record for the events you are running. All 593 CY and beyond scenarios will of course already have the correct cert file included. Over the next year, this problem will slowly work itself out and disappear. ✨

What is LIVING GREYHAWK?

LIVING GREYHAWK is the largest, most popular shared-world DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign in the history of gaming. Run under the auspices of the RPGA Network (RPGA), the campaign offers gamers around the world the chance to contribute to the developing history of Oerth by playing specially constructed adventures at conventions, game days, or in the comfort of home. For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, visit

www.living-greyhawk.com

PLACES OF MYSTERY

GATEWAYS TO ADVENTURE

by Gary Holian · illustrated by Kalman Andrasofszky

THE DRAGONSHED BARROWS



Since the arrival of the Aerdi more than 600 years ago, the uplands warding the peninsula of Onnwal have been known as the Headlands. The ancient Flan called them the Dragonshead Hills, for their stark appearance and for the numerous fierce wyrms hatched in their unforgiving heights. To this day, a handful of great drakes and numerous wyverns range throughout the region, nesting in forlorn crags and mountaintop caverns.

Today, most Headland settlements (notably mines and other delves fashioned by hillfolk) remain within the vicinity of Irongate and the low foothills of Onnwal, near the coast. The relative inaccessibility of the central heights and the inhospitable nature of their environs have kept the bulk of the Headlands free from trespass for most of the last 500 years, but myths and legends of the distant past persist to this day, drawing the attention of scholars and adventurers alike.


The hardy Flan who once populated these hinterlands lived on the westernmost verges of the fabled prehistoric Kingdom of Queen Ehliisa, known today primarily for the Fabulous Nightingale artifact that bears her name. Scholars have long assumed that the hills hold great treasure due to the nature of the hoarding dragons that once called them home, but the Headlands also contain answers to some of the deepest mysteries of the ancient Flan. Until now, however, the hills have kept their most interesting secrets to themselves.

Before the Great Migrations brought new disease, magic, and violence to the Flanaess, wide-ranging tribes of Flan thrived in the hilly regions between the Pomarj and the Hesimark Highlands, but their numbers have dwindled in recent years. The folk of Onnwal refer to the local hillfolk as Headlanders. Numbering about a thousand, the fierce warriors have guarded their ancient burial places ruthlessly for most of their history, often from intrepid explorers seeking the tombs of the *Hradikar*, fearless, dedicated ancient Flan fighters renowned for their courage and bravura.

Totemic warriors chosen above all others from the hardy hillfolk to represent their clans and serve as a vanguard to the Ahlissan Throne at the city of Karnosa (near modern Irongate), the greatest *Hradikar* often served the queen as personal bodyguards. Like the early Flan heroes Krovis and the warrior-chief Torvan of the Drachensgrab Hills to the west, local heroes like Vestakan the Huntress and the fierce brothers Graguul and Venod gave rise to legends of their own.

Vestakan the Huntress, *Hardikar* of old.





Upon the death of a *Hradikar* (whether in battle or after infirmity forced their retirement and ritual suicide), the local community spared no expense to honor them with elaborate tombs situated near the place of their birth. These hallowed resting places reportedly dot the highest crests of the Headlands landscape, defying discovery by blending naturally with the surrounding terrain. Local dwarves and gnomes, who have inhabited the Headlands for centuries, hate the Flan and deny assistance to those who seek to have anything to do with them, even those planning to desecrate the holy tombs of the *Hradikar*.

Usually located in solitary places, high among the folds of the undulating hills or within carefully sheltered cracks and crevices, the ancient tombs often were covered by a pile of unworked stone and earth, forming an exterior mound that requires extensive excavation to uncover. Some of the larger tombs (such as those dedicated to the heroes mentioned above) are located in exceedingly deep delves, and often include many rough-hewn rooms complete with elaborate traps and *bas-relief* carvings recording the deeds of the deceased *Hradikar*. Rarely, the Flan buried their heroes in the abandoned aeries of dragons, some of which have gained new monstrous inhabitants in the ensuing centuries.

Under the camouflaging rubble, tomb entrances generally feature a bestial totem capstone. Lesser creatures such as mountain lions, wolves, or eagles tend to mark the burial sites of most *Hradikar*, while the greatest of the deceased are honored by images of fantastical creatures such as wyverns, dragons, griffons, or chimeras. Even some of the undisturbed tombs contain little more than mundane weapons and cultural artifacts, but approximately one in eight hold the remains of a great Flan warrior-prince buried along with his weapons and armor, as well as the bodies and accoutrements of his soldiers and personal attendants.

Many such weapons bear the device of the ancient Flan kingdom of Ahlissa (named for its famous Queen), whose sorcerous artificers rival the best weaponsmiths of the modern era. In addition to impressive weapons, many of the tombs contain armor crafted from the hides of powerful or magical beasts, including dragons. Explorations to date have turned up so few examples of such artifice that many Irongate scholars believe the vast bulk of Ancient Ahlissan artifacts remain hidden away. Rumors that a secluded Headlands vale might hide the final resting place of Queen Ehlissa herself fuel much speculation among the adventurers of Irongate, many of whom have more ideas about how to spend the discovered treasure than they do about how to find it.

Flan Headlanders protect the tombs of their honored ancestors from desecration as they have for centuries, and tales of hauntings litter the oral traditions of these proud

people. The reports of Aerdi scholars confirm such stories, recounting tales of narrow escapes from numerous undead or vicious monsters who have claimed the delves as their own. Those foolish enough to brave battles with the undead usually balk at taking on the dragons and other winged creatures native to the region.

The Greyhawk Wars, however, changed the Headlands, just as they changed so many other places in the Flanaess. The Headlanders fiercely resisted Scarlet Brotherhood incursions during their occupation of greater Onnwal, and the local tribes lost many of their best warriors, depriving dozens of barrows of their protectors and leaving them open to graverobbers. The Brotherhood's naval blockade and siege of Irongate drove many citizens into the hills, and the armies of Free Onnwal used the lower Headlands as a base of operations, further opening the heights to scrutiny.

Adventurers have flocked to the Free City of Irongate over the last two seasons, following stories of fantastic discoveries in the Dragonshead Barrows (as the tombs are now known). The influx of treasure-seeking explorers echoes the adventuring boom that "made" the Free City of Greyhawk in the 550s, when thrillseekers from throughout the Flanaess converged on the city to exploit the wealth and adventure offered by Castle Greyhawk and the Cairn Hills. Whether the rush will help the city to expand or will plunge it into lawlessness remains for historians to decide.

DM's Notes: The treasures brought back to Irongate are undeniable in both quality and quantity—even the mundane items show evidence of a highly advanced "Bronze Age" culture. The leadership of Free Onnwal recognizes the barrows as a potential source of wealth to fund their insurgency, but remain wary of offending their prospective allies, the Flan hillmen. Magical traps still guard the most important tombs, sometimes involving monsters kept in stasis or devastating discharges of eldritch energy. Early explorations uncovered evidence that one *Hradikar* barrow contained access to a warren of subterranean tunnels linking it to other burial sites. No one knows who created these tunnels, but links to the Underdark seem likely.

The adventuring boom has placed Irongate's government in a tight political situation. On the surface, the city must respect the territorial and burial rites of the Flan hillfolk. Rumors place the number of undiscovered barrows in the hundreds, however, which offers a potential financial boon to the city the likes of which has not been seen in the more than a century since the Turmoil Between Crowns plunged the Great Kingdom into chaos. Publicly, Lord Mayor Cobb Darg and his ministers decry the explorations, but evidence of tacit approval is everywhere.

Despite the increase in explorations, the Headlands remain an extremely dangerous environment, and many intrepid adventures do not return at all. On rare occasions, explorers return to the city with wondrous treasure, attracting the notice of even the otherwise stolid Artificer's Union.

Last Brewfest, a ghostly figure dressed in the livery of the ancient *Hradikar* passed through the city walls and entered the Leaky Lantern, a known hangout of adventurers exploring the Dragonshead Barrows. The apparition scattered the entire house and half the surrounding block before it was subdued by clerics in the employ of the city watch. Some sober voices in government suggest outlawing expeditions into the western

hills, but the decidedly less sober voices of the city's influential adventuring community have so far managed to shout down such proposals.

THE HOOL BEACON

North of the vast meanders of the Javan River, where the Hool Marshes verge upon the dark boughs of the Dreadwood, lies an expanse of swamp some 100 square miles in size. Thickly overgrown, covered with a mixture of cypress trees, saw grass, and other stranger botanical specimens growing out of the muck to create a trackless morass, the bemired ground makes for difficult passage for any would-be explorers. The region is not known for its flora, fauna, or terrain, however, but for the dull green glow at its center, which emanates for miles and serves as a local landmark during murky Hool nights. The light's origin frightens away even the heartiest marshfolk, and has been a source of mystery for years since the light first shone forth. The luminescence intensifies as one approaches its source—the upper reaches of the central keep of a small, ruined fort. The structure resembles a ghostly lighthouse, but most who have seen it consider it an infernal beacon to the underworld.

Located on a low hillock (one of the few patches of solid ground in the region), the long-abandoned structure was once a Keolandish foothold. One of a chain of similar forts constructed more than a century ago to protect the kingdom's southern border during Keoland's ill-fated imperial age, the never-completed keep suffered a series of enervating attacks by local tribes of lizardfolk, who inhabited the place after the exhausted Keolandians finally abandoned it, deciding at last to establish the kingdom's southern frontier in the Dreadwood.

The lizardfolk didn't hold sway for long. Nearly a century ago, the diabolical Cult of the Black Flame, led by a charismatic Suloise high priest known as Ohjos (the "Eye of God"), swept in to claim the ruined works and complete construction of the fort. Although denizens of the marsh shunned the place, word of the cult's increasing outrages soon spread beyond the borders of the Hool. When several youths, including the children of nobility, began disappearing from a neighboring province of Keoland, the local lord, Count Arthemene, assembled a small army, even bidding reluctant old King Nyhan IV to sponsor a contingent of grizzled Dreadwood rangers, known as the Dreadwalkers to assist in the effort. The host marched on the cult's fort, but much to their surprise, they found no evidence of the cult. It had vanished into the mists like a morning fog, leaving the keep totally abandoned save for the grisly remains of the Keolandish younglings.

And so the keep remained until about twenty years ago, when a mage exiled from Keoland took up residence in the lonely fort. Called Baltronus Zemner of Linth, the wizard of some repute (much of it ill) had spent a good deal of his life combing the depths of the Dreadwood looking for the lost magic of the infamous (though by that time extinct) Suel House of Malhel. According to legend, the Malhel came to a cataclysmic end at their own hands after dabbling in long-lost magic in the years following the Great Migrations. Despite longstanding Keoish prohibitions against seeking out the dark heritage of the Malhel, "Baltron" craved this knowledge and could not be dissuaded from its pursuit.

Expelled from the national academy of wizards and hounded from Niolo Dra for his efforts, Baltron was able to continue his

research undisturbed in the lonely Hool Marsh keep. His research reportedly involved the summoning of a lost elemental power of great might, which he hoped to bend to his will and make his servant. After many years of isolation, Baltron finally succeeded in his summoning, but was unable to control the forces which he unleashed, resulting in a calamitous backfire which destroyed the mage, damaged the keep, and set off the eerie green glow now visible in all directions from the heights of the central tower.

The Silent Ones of Niolo Dra, guardians of Keoland's magical secrets, attempted an exploration of the ruins shortly after the explosion, eager to discover Baltron's fate and whereabouts, but the small party was driven away by certain powerful and evil denizens of the swamp, who flocked to the disturbing beacon. One of the Keoish agents, a monk named Eson, braved the beacon alone, but never returned.

Just prior to the Greyhawk Wars, a man named Leptor, a protégé of Baltron and a moderately powerful wizard in his own right, led a party to explore the ruins as part of an expedition sponsored by an organization of adventuring explorers known as the Seekers, who once claimed Baltron as a member. The expedition included the infamous ranger lord Arcturus of Sayre, known throughout the kingdom for his treachery, along with a rag-tag mercenary retinue. Leptor and his band sought out not only Baltron's dark knowledge, but the treasure said to have been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame, hidden and undiscovered somewhere within the citadel. The party's fate remains unknown. Some say that Leptor spent many months trying to reclaim the ruins and their secrets amid the omnipresent threat of lizardfolk attack only to disappear one forlorn night, never to be seen since. Some claim that the Cult of the Black Flame has finally returned. Though rumors abound of treasure and mystery at the site, few in the past decade have attempted to claim the place for themselves.

DM's Notes: Baltron's research appears to have uncovered only fragments of the lost lore of the Malhel. His surviving notes indicate that his experiments succeeded in drawing the attention of an evil and powerful elemental being of the Plane of Ooze. This Mud Lord, possibly the being known as Nakimas to the Suel or to some Oeridian scholars as Bwimb, briefly gained access to Oerth during Baltron's summoning, but the wizard failed utterly to properly ward himself and was sucked into the maw of the crackling nexus that accompanied the elemental lord. The resulting fracture in the veil between the planes has remained open ever since, and is causing the sickly green glow that emanates from the top of the tower. The glow attracts creatures with similar affinities to the nexus and allows malicious (and highly dangerous) elemental creatures to pass unfettered into the Material Plane, further exacerbating the extreme dangers of the region.

The strange energy that seeps from the nexus has fostered a resurgence of the Cult of the Black Flame. According to rumors, Ohjos, the leader of the cult in the last century, was directly descendent from the last scion of House Malhel. He and his followers escaped destruction at the hands of Arthemene's host by opening doorways to other dimensions and leaving the tower from somewhere within its walls, perhaps escaping to a secret underground temple. Leptor and his cohorts tried to discover the secret of the Black Flame, but reportedly met a swift fate at unknown hands. ✨